

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAN JO 00246 182144Z
ACTION ARA-10

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R 182040Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6204

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, CS
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S REMARKS TO ARA LABOR ATTACHE CONFERENCE

FOR ARA/RPP

DEPT PASS WILLIAM C. DOHERTY, AIFLD

REF: MAISTO/DOHERTY TELCON JANUARY 17, 1977

PER REQUEST REF TELCON, FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF AMBASSADOR
TODMAN'S WELCOMING REMARKS TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE ARA
LABOR ATTACHE CONFERENCE, SAN JOSE, SEPTEMBER 20, 1976:

"MR. SECRETARY, DISTINGUISHED PARTICIPANTS IN
THE ARA LABOR ATTACHE CONFERENCE, LADIES AND
GENTLEMEN,

"I AM PLEASED AND HONORED TO WELCOME YOU TO THIS
LOVELY COUNTRY FOR A WEEK OF EXCHANGES ABOUT THE LABOR
SITUATION AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS HEMISPHERE AND THEIR
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES.

"MY SENSE OF PLEASURE IS BASED ON A NUMBER OF
CONSIDERATIONS. FOR ONE THING, AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, I
HAD THE OPPORTUNITY AND PRIVILEGE DURING MY FIRST
OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENT IN INDIA MANY YEARS AGO, AS A
YOUNG FSO, TO DO LABOR WORK. IMPRESSIONS FORMED
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THEN AND THE EXPERIENCE GAINED LED ME THROUGHOUT THE
REST OF MY FOREIGN SERVICE CAREER TO PAY SPECIAL
ATTENTION TO THE FIELD OF LABOR AS A BASIC PILLAR FOR
SOCIETY.

"I HAVE BECOME CONVINCED THAT OUR UNDERSTANDING
OF THE NATURE OF ANY SOCIETY IS LIKELY TO DEPEND TO A

LARGE EXTENT ON OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE PLACE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE WORKERS, THAT IS, LABOR, IN IT. ONE CAN TELL MUCH ABOUT HOW FREE A SOCIETY IS BY OBSERVING HOW FREE THE WORKERS ARE TO ORGANIZE THEMSELVES INTO GROUPS WITH POWER, RESPONSIBLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY EXERCISED, TO REPRESENT THEIR LEGITIMATE INTERESTS IN MATTERS AFFECTING THEIR CONDITION OF WORK, THEIR INCOMES, THEIR STANDARDS OF LIVING. ONE CAN TELL MUCH ABOUT HOW JUST A SOCIETY IS BY OBSERVING WHAT PART OF THE WEALTH PRODUCED REACHES THE WORKERS. ONE CAN UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE A GOVERNMENT ATTACHES TO LABOR BY LEARNING SOMETHING ABOUT THE SIZE, FUNCTIONS, AND POWER OF THE GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS WHICH DEAL WITH LABOR MATTERS. ONE CAN PREDICT WITH REASONABLE CERTAINTY HOW A SOCIETY WILL EVOLVE IF ONE UNDERSTANDS HOW THE WORKER FEELS ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITIES AFFORDED TO HIM. WHERE WORKERS ARE OPPRESSED AND UNFREE, SOONER OR LATER IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER, THEY WILL FIND A WAY TO EXPRESS THEIR DISSATISFACTION AND TO SEEK CHANGES MORE FAVORABLE TO THEMSELVES. IF WE WOULD UNDERSTAND THE SOCIETIES IN WHICH WE WORK AND LIVE AND WITH WHICH OUR COUNTRY MUST DEAL IN THIS INTERDEPENDENT WORLD, WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE DYNAMICS AND ATTITUDES OF THE LABOR FIELD.

"FOR ME, THIS MEANS THAT WHAT LABOR OFFICERS SEE, HEAR, AND REPORT IS CRUCIAL TO THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS AND TO OUR RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES ON A BROAD RANGE OF MATTERS, BOTH BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL. YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THEN WHY I CONSIDER YOUR WORK AND THIS CONFERENCE TO BE MATTERS OF UNCLASSIFIED

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EXTREME IMPORTANCE.

"THE ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONING OF OUR OWN SOCIETY HAS SHOWN US WHAT A VITAL ROLE A DYNAMIC AND RESPONSIBLE LABOR MOVEMENT HAS PLAYED AND CONTINUES TO PLAY IN PROMOTING PROSPERITY. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT IN OTHER PLACES ALSO THE EXISTENCE OF A GENUINELY FREE LABOR MOVEMENT CAN AND WILL CONTRIBUTE IN LARGE MEASURE TO BUILDING SOCIETIES CONDUCIVE TO THE WELFARE OF ALL THEIR PEOPLE AND TO FULL AND FREE COOPERATION WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. IT CERTAINLY MUST BE IN OUR INTEREST TO SEE SUCH SOCIETIES DEVELOP AND PROSPER.

"FOR ALL THESE REASONS, IT IS ENCOURAGING TO NOTE THAT AFTER A LAPSE OF SOME TWENTY YEARS A CONFERENCE OF WASHINGTON AND FIELD-BASED PERSONNEL WHO DEAL WITH LABOR MATTERS AFFECTING LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IS BEING HELD ONCE MORE. KNOWING THE GREAT VALUE THAT CAN BE DERIVED FROM THE OPPORTUNITY TO LISTEN TO AND HOLD DISCUSSIONS WITH SUCH DISTINGUISHED, WELL-INFORMED AND EXPERIENCED OFFICIALS AS ARE GATHERED HERE AND

FROM THE NUMEROUS INTERCHANGES WITH EACH OTHER OUTSIDE THE
CONFERENCE ROOM, I CAN ONLY HOPE THAT SIMILAR MEETINGS WILL
BECOME A REGULAR MATTER. THE U.S. SURELY WILL BE THE GAINER.

"I AM PARTICULARLY PLEASED THAT THIS MEETING IS BEING HELD
IN COSTA RICA, A FRIENDLY COUNTRY KNOWN FOR ITS FUNCTIONING
DEMOCRACY, ITS CIVILIAN TRADITION, ITS SEARCH FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE,
ITS PREOCCUPATION WITH YOUTH AND EDUCATION, AND ITS SOUND
AND INDEPENDENTLY ARRIVED-AT COMMON SENSE POSITIONS IN INTER-
NATIONAL FORA. AS IN OTHER FREE SOCIETIES, WORKERS HERE MAY
ORGANIZE AS THEY SEE FIT TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT THEIR OWN
INTERESTS. THERE IS A DEMOCRATIC LABOR MOVEMENT TRYING HARD TO
COME INTO ITS OWN. AND TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE FREEDOM THE
COUNTRY OFFERS, THERE ARE OTHER MOVEMENTS, INCLUDING THOSE
WHICH WOULD IN THE END SUPPRESS THE VERY FREEDOM ON WHICH THEY
THRIVE. THUS, COSTA RICA, BUSTLING WITH DEMOCRACY AND THE
PROBLEMS THAT FLOW FROM IT, IS AS ABSORBING A COUNTRY AS ITS
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PEOPLE ARE WARM. I KNOW YOU WILL ENJOY YOUR STAY HERE.

"AS A FINAL WORD, I INVITE YOU TO REGARD EMBASSY SAN JOSE
FULLY AS YOUR OWN AND TO FEEL FREE TO CALL ON US FOR WHATEVER
ASSISTANCE YOU MIGHT NEED. WE WILL DO OUR VERY BEST TO RESPOND
AS POSITIVELY AS WE CAN. AS IS SAID IN COSTA RICA, 'ESTAMOS
A SUS ORDENES Y PARA SERVIRLES.'

"YOU HAVE MY VERY BEST WISHES FOR A SUCCESSFUL AND ENJOYABLE
CONFERENCE AND A VERY PLEASANT STAY IN COSTA RICA.

"THANK YOU."
TODMAN

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